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A
DESCRIPTION
OF
HAWKSTONE,

The SEAT of
SIR RICHARD HILL, BART.
ONE OF THE
Knights of the Shire for the County
of SALOP.

By T. RODENHURST. K

THE SECOND EDITION,
With several ALTERATIONS and ADDITIONS.

Where Nature paints, what beauties fill the mind!
And how the soul expands with joys refin'd!
Reflection seizes, and to man displays
Infinite Wisdom—claiming all our Praise.

PROSPECT, A POEM, BY E. T.

S H R E W S B U R Y:

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M,DCC,LXXXIV.



T O

Sir RICHARD HILL, Bart.

O N E O F T H E

REPRESENTATIVES in PARLIAMENT
for the County of SALOP,

T H E F O L L O W I N G

Description of Hawkstone,

I S

Most respectfully inscribed,

B Y

HIS MOST OBEDIENT,

A N D

MOST DEVOTED SERVANT,

The AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Reception which the First Edition of this Work met with by the inhabitants of the neighborhood of Hawkstone, where only it was sold, and which the Writer is sensible, was more on account of the respect they have for the Place, and the worthy Owner, than for the merit of the Description, has occasioned a Second Edition to make its appearance, in which the reader will find considerable alterations and improvements, and for which the Author acknowledges him-
A 3 *self*

self indebted to several respectable Gentlemen of learning and taste.

To enter upon a minute Description of the romantic scenes, amazing varieties, and natural as well as artificial beauties of Hawkstone-Park, requires far superior abilities than the Writer hereof pretends to be possessed of: However, he presumes the following pages will be found entertaining to the generality of readers, particularly to those whose curiosity may induce them to visit the beautiful and astonishing scenes of which they treat.

MAY 1, 1784.

A
DESCRIPTION
OF
HAWKSTONE, &c.

HAWKSTONE, is a spacious and noble Mansion-House, long the residence of the ancient family of the HILLS, and now belonging to Sir RICHARD HILL, Bart. one of the worthy Representatives in Parliament for the County of Salop. The elegance of the structure is exceeded by few; the hospitality of the Owner by none.

THE

THE WEST PORTICO,

Is allowed to be a capital piece of Architecture.

THE HOUSE

Is situated on the North side of a hill, not far out of the road between Shrewsbury & Whitchurch.

In the inside of the House, the Saloon, Chapel and Library,* are particularly worthy of observation; but

* The two latter, viz. the Chapel and Library, are in the North Wing, which is separated from the body of the House by a Colonnade. In the ceiling of the former is a very masterly painting of Truth appealing to Time for bringing her to light, and Falsehood flying away affrighted. The piece was designed as emblematical of the Reformation. The Saloon is a very lofty, spacious,

but as the Beauties of Nature are preferable to those of Art, and as few people have leisure to see more than

cious, and well-proportioned room; it is fitted up in a costly manner, and adorned with some choice paintings; among which is the Siege of Namur. The five principal characters in this piece, were all taken from life. These are King William; the Elector of Bavaria; the Duke of Marlborough; Count Cohorn, and the Right Honorable Richard Hill, (uncle to the late Sir Rowland Hill, Bart. and great uncle to the present Sir Richard) who was at that time Paymaster of the Army, and Envoy at the Court of Turin.

The Writer could not procure any certain account by whom the House was originally fabricated. The late Sir Rowland Hill, Bart. father of Sir Richard, built both the wings, and made other very considerable additions to it; but it was certainly the Family Mansion so long ago as the reign of Henry the third, down to the time of Sir Rowland Hill, Knight, who was Lord Mayor of

than the Park, which alone would engage the attention of persons of taste for a whole day, or indeed for

two

of London, A. D. 1549, in the reign of Edward the sixth, of which extraordinary and truly excellent person, an Historian, who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, gives the following character :

“ This Maior, Sir Rowland Hill, was a grave
 “ and worthy Father of the citie, and long be-
 “ fore his death he gave over his occupying
 “ in trade, and gave himself wholly to pur-
 “ chasing lands, having never a child in the
 “ world. The greatest part of his lands lay in
 “ Shropshire, where he bore great rule, and
 “ where also, as I have heard by credible report,
 “ he did many good deedes, namely, that he
 “ raised no rents, nor took any fines of his te-
 “ nants; he suffered the child to enjoy the father's
 “ farm before all other; he was a friend to the
 “ widow and fatherless; he erected a Grammar
 “ Schoole to the profyte of the country; he re-
 “ paired many highways and bridges; and
 “ where

two or three days, the walks being
very extensive †, and fresh beauties

“wheresoever a good dede was to be done for
“the common weal of his countrymen, he was
“ready to further the cause. He gave yerely
“to the poore people of the country three hun-
“dred shirtes and smockes, and as many frockes
“and coates of fryse, to cover them withal. And
“in the cite of London he gave five hundred
“pounds to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, and to-
“wards the building of certain new tenements in
“St. Nicholas’ Shambles, for the relief of the
“poore. He also gave great relief to all the Hof-
“pitals. And at his death, he gave CL. to the
“poore of all the wards in London.”

To the foregoing account, the following one
from *Kimber’s New Baronetage*, may not be un-
acceptable :

“He (Sir Rowland Hill) did great acts of
“generosity, was an eminent benefactor to the
“public ; founded Drayton, and other Free
“Schoels ; built Stoke and Hodnet Churches,
“Atcham and Terne Bridges, at his own ex-
“pence.”

† Upwards of ten miles in length.

con-

continually presenting themselves to view, I shall confine myself chiefly to those pleasingly wild and romantic scenes which in all places would justly come under the denomination of *the sublime*, but are here doubly striking on account of their being in the midst of a fine, fruitful, champain country, bounded all round by different ranges of distant hills, so that on a clear day you may see no less than twelve counties with the naked eye ‡.

Leaving the House, you proceed by an easy ascent through the side

‡ These are Shropshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, Merionethshire, and Radnorshire.

of

of a wilderness of lofty trees,
chiefly Beeches, 'till you arrive at
the

SUMMER HOUSE,

Which is an handsome building
of free-stone in the Octagon form.
The inside is elegantly painted in
fresco, with a representation of the
four Seasons, &c. &c. From the
windows and the terrace that sur-
rounds it, you have a pleasing near
prospect of a piece of water, and
some verdant meadows ; and a dis-
tant one of Broxton Hills, and De-
lamere Forest in Cheshire.

Under the Summer House is a
large and spacious Cold Bath, fed

B

by

by a crystal spring which issues from the side of a bank at a few yards distance.

From the Summer House you are conducted by a pleasant walk on the side of the hill to the

G U L P H,

So called, being a small valley which terminates between two hills, and separates the Grotto-rock from the other hill. Coming immediately out of a beautiful lawn, and having no suspicion of the sudden manner in which nature changes her visage, this place appears truly romantic, and the valley on your left, perhaps, not inferior

ferior to Tempe, a fair field in
Theffaly, so much celebrated by
the antient poets,

“ The Graces there delighted oft to rove,

“ In blithesome concert, innocence, and love.”

You then proceed along a rising
walk on the top of the rock, de-
lightfully variegated on each side
with shrubs and trees till you come
to the solemn entrance into the

G R O T T O,

Which is a vast subterraneous cave,
supported by rugged pillars hewn
in the solid rock, at a great ex-
pence; in the midst of which is a
spacious Cove, curiously beset with
costly shells, selected from the re-

moteft regions of the fea, and in-laid with petrefactions and foſſils, from the deepeſt receſſes of the earth. You view with amazement, the different dwellings of the briny inhabitants; ſome burniſhed with gloſs of the deepeſt hue, others rugged with points, and cruſted by nature; ſome nicely turned and ſpeckled with varniſh, and ſome ſhining as gems, or ſparkling like diamonds. Theſe being joined with coral, tinged with ore, ſpangled with mineral, and receiving light through ſome exquisitely fine painted glaſs,* form one of the moſt beautiful Saloons that imagination

* Particularly a Philoſopher at his Studies,
by Mrs. PEIRSON.

can

can conceive, or fancy describe; the whole being executed with a masterly boldness, perfectly characteristic with the scenes around you, without any thing of that diminutive or formal decoration, by which Grottos are usually rendered more like artificial *baby-houses*, than grand natural and romantic caverns.

A noble Lord in the neighborhood of HAWKSTONE, having made a present to Sir RICHARD HILL of a very fine wax figure, representing an ancestor of that Lord, Sir RICHARD has placed it in a recess in the Grotto, but it is quite concealed from view when you enter in ; however, when you

have looked about you a short while, this venerable Effigy gradually rises up before you, and turning about his head to look at the company, holds in his hands the following inscription for their perusal :

Let those surround the throne of Kings,
 Who court the pomp that grandeur brings,
 Tho' sprung from Needham's noble race,
 'Tis here I fix my dwelling place;
 Contentment be my happy lot,
 My lov'd abode this peaceful Grott.

Passing through a colonade of rude pillars, tinged with copper, with which those rocks abound, you leave this labyrinth of wonders through a door on the West, where you command a most noble view of an

AWFUL PRECIPICE.

Here the towering oak is lost beneath the rugged rocks bulging with terror!—Next you admire with astonishment, the huge pending craggs, still more highly colour'd with copper, or hoary with age, and whilst the wide chasms between the rocks, strike you with dread, you often hear the Ravens which build upon them, croaking over your head*. The green lawn, the fertile distant prospect, and the water which you look down upon below, contrast the view, and add life to the scene.

* There is an high point on the Grotto rock, called the *Raven's Shelf*, because time immemorial the Ravens have annually made a nest there.

You

You are then conducted to a delightful retir'd spot in the midst of the Thick Wood, where you may repose yourself on a rustic sofa, made of various sorts of curious moss. Then turning under the Grotto Hill, by a pleasant walk, with something new every step, you encircle this immense mass or island of freestone rock, and turning your eyes upwards, you behold most enormous shelves hanging over you, and particularly near a place cut through the rock, with two seats opposite each other, called the *Vis a Vis*.

This grand Hill then stretches itself out towards the South-West;
but

but before you advance, it will be proper to stand still and view these stately rocks, which look more like the ruins of Palmyra or Persepolis, than the lofty turrets of Nature, heaped one upon another like so many demolished castles tumbled into ruin.

Some of the first Nobility, both of this and of other nations, have visited these scenes; and that noble Corsican General Paschal Paoli declared, that in all his travels, he had seen nothing which afforded him so much delight*.

* What this distinguished Foreigner appeared to be most struck with, was a view under the Grotto Hill, where the Red Castle Rock breaks in upon you, which place is now distinguished by the name of *Paoli's Point*.

En-

Entirely taking leave of the Grotto Hill, you proceed by the side of some fine stately Oaks, and some rugged cliffs (the most remarkable of which, called the *Ship's Beak*, seems as if it had once been separated from the main rock by some violent convulsion of Nature) till you arrive at a natural Cave, called

THE RETREAT,

The top of which hangs in small rocky clouds over your head, and has in it some veins resembling mortar, of a brackish taste.

In this Cave are seen the following beautiful lines, penned by
the

the present Owner of the place,
while he was contemplating these
scenes :

“ Whilst all thy glories, O my God,
Through the creation shine,
Whilst rocks, and hills, and fertile vales,
Proclaim the hand Divine,

Oh ! may I view with humble heart,
The wonders of thy power,
Display'd alike in wilder scenes,
As in each blade and flower.

But whilst I taste thy blessings, LORD,
And sip the streams below,
O may my soul be led to thee,
From whom all blessings flow !

And if such footsteps of thy love,
Through this lost world we trace,
How far transcendent are thy works,
Throughout the world of grace.

Just as before yon' noontide sun
The brightest stars are small,
So earthly comforts are but snares,
'Till grace has crown'd them all.”

Quitting the Retreat, and passing by the *Canopy* and *Indian Rock*, your eyes are feasted with fresh beauties of the solemn and romantic kind, till you come to a well-designed little Cottage, which is an Hermit's summer residence. — You pull a bell, and gain admittance.

THE HERMIT,

Is generally in a sitting posture, with a table before him, on which is a skull, the emblem of mortality, an hour-glass, a book, and a pair of spectacles. The venerable bare-footed Father, whose name is Francis, (if awake) always rises up at the approach of strangers.

He

He seems about 90 years of age,
 yet has all his senses to admiration.
 He is tolerably conversant, and far
 from being unpolite, and, if re-
 quested, will repeat the following
 lines, which are fixed up in the in-
 side of his habitation :

“ Far from the busy scenes of life,
 Far from the world, it's cares and strife,
 In solitude more pleas'd to dwell,
 'The Hermit bids you to his cell ;
 Warns you Sin's gilded baits to fly,
 And calls you to prepare to die.”

Leaving this solitary Sire, you
 pass to

THE FOX'S KNOB,

So named, because a Fox is said
 to have jumped from the top of it

C

to

to the deep valley beneath, when unkennelled there by a pack of fox-hounds. It is of a pyramidical form, finely mantled with trees and ivy. Whether it was at first raised by an earthquake, or whether the ground was swept away from it by the raging billows of the great deluge, and this rock left as a standing monument of its devastations, may afford matter of speculation to the curious; suffice it to say, that it now exhibits a most astonishing appearance.

Your guide will then conduct you to a subterraneous passage, called by some, CALCUTTA, by others,

St.

St. FRANCIS's CAVE,

Into which you enter under the curiously twisted root of a most venerable Yew-tree. After having groped for some yards in total darkness, you are suddenly transported into the chearful light of day; and which ever way you turn yourself, the most enchanting prospect, intermixed with woods, hills, lawn and water, and enlivened with the busy scenes of Agriculture, meets your view.

From thence turning a little to the left, you gradually ascend the summit of

THE TERRACE,

Where you are invited by the pleasantness of the walk, having a fine green turf under your feet, and on each side all sorts of forest trees, the foliage of which reaches down to the ground, with openings at proper spaces, through which distant prospects burst in upon your view, whilst hundreds of the little feathered tribe charm the ears with their wild melodious notes.

Along the top of this cultivated Alps, you continue rising by a very easy ascent, till you come to

THE

THE TOWER,

A large handsome building in the Gothic stile, situate on the highest part of the Terrace, which forms a fine prospect to all the country several miles round.

The Hill here turns round to the East, where

THE VINEYARD,

Which is laid out in the manner of a fortification, with turrets, walls, and bastions, and executed at a very great expence, attracts your attention.

From the Tower just mentioned, your eye traverses a vast space of
C 3 country.

country. You see the town of Shrewsbury, and many of the Cambrian Hills, with their pointed peaks propping the clouds : You behold that celebrated Hill *Caer Caradoc*, or Caradoc's Castle, famous in History for a bulwark of stone, where Caractacus the Briton, bravely defended himself against the Roman General. You see that magnificent Salopian mountain the Wrekin ; also the Brythen, Moely-Golva, and Caverokesken hills, on the former of which the pillar lately erected in honor of Lord Rodney, presents itself to your view.

About

About a mile from the Tower, you are struck with a beautiful and romantic hanging wood, called

BURY WALLS,

Where are the remains of a grand Roman Camp. It encompasses about twenty acres of ground, secured by an inaccessible rock on all sides but one, which is strongly defended by a triple intrenchment, and must have been a work of immense labor *.

You then leave these heights, and wind down a solemnly beau-

* Upon the top of Hopley, a neighboring hill belonging to Andrew Corbet, Esq; and which presents itself to your view from various parts of the Park, are some vestiges of another encampment, supposed also to have been Roman.

tiful

tiful walk, closed up with trees and rocks on each side, till you come to a flight of many rude steps, at the bottom of which you cross

THE VALLEY,

Which from a seat close to the walk, discovers at once every charming feature which Nature has it in her power to disclose, particularly a long range of broken rocks mantled with wood, and here and there standing out like castles, form a picture beyond the reach of all description.

Passing over the Top of the Valley, you arrive at

THE

THE ELYSIAN HILL,

On the South side of which is the MENAGERIE, where Nature is aided by Art, without seeming to be her debtor.

Here are kept a choice collection of Beasts and Birds, both foreign and domestic, among which is a remarkably large Eagle, also a Mackaw, and various sorts of Parrots, with some different species of Monkeys, all of which will gladly search your pockets for gingerbread, nuts, almonds, &c. and be as familiar with you as you please.

At

At the upper end is a little characteristic dwelling, fitted up with stuffed Birds so nicely resembling Nature, that you can hardly distinguish them from living ones.

This rural habitation is occupied by a Man and his Wife, who may well be called the Adam and Eve of this delightful Eden. Adam is busily employed in cleaning his ground, whilst Eve bestirs herself about her domestic affairs, and feeds her Poultry, which flock round her in great numbers, on the ringing of a Bell.

Here Art and Nature are in Truth combin'd,
To please the Eye, and captivate the Mind.

You

You then reluctantly leave this most delightful spot, and turn to the right through a narrow shady Path, where stately Larches and Beeches, &c. feather down to the ground with peculiar beauty.

You have scarce proceeded an hundred yards, before you are struck with the appearance of

THE GREEN-HOUSE,

Which is built in the Gothic Taste, with rough unhewn stone, and is perfectly in unison with the majestic scenery all round it.

Here again Nature displays all her charms, and the sublime and beautiful

beautiful ardently vie with each other, which shall most attract the attention of the beholder.

The contrast between the Green Lawn before you, bespread with Orange Trees, Myrtles, and Geranions, with a Flock of Sheep peacably feeding in a verdant pasture, and the stupenduous Rocks dignified with lofty Forest Trees behind and on each side of you, with a most delightful Piece of Water flowing at the foot of the lawn in form of a wide River, and losing both its ends in two different Woods, exhibits at one view a Landscape at the same time so majestic,

jestic, and yet so delicately softened, that it would require the united efforts of Salvator Rosa, Claude, and Poussin, to do it the smallest degree of justice.

Leaving the Green-House, you wind round the South East end of the Elysian Hill, and as you mount up, new beauties still surprize you. In some places all is thick and solemn, and you find various rude and whimsical seats to rest on, by the side of mossy banks or rocky caverns. In other places, just as you emerge out of the wood, the near and distant prospects both break in upon you at once, and the precipices you have lately trodden,

D den,

den, put on new appearances as you face them, and according to the different directions you view them in.

After having reposed yourself a sufficient time on a large Alcove Seat made of knots of Oak, you will be prepared to finish your walk over the Elysian Hill, especially as you will be on the descent all the way.

You are now to cross another part of the enchanting Valley beneath, till you arrive at

THE RED CASTLE HILL,
So called from the colour of the Rock, and of the Stone with which the Castle itself is built.

Having ascended this lofty and delightfully romantic Hill, you enter the Edifice thro' a strong Door or Gate-way, which in time of war must have been very difficult of access.

This venerable Fortrefs, long the feat of warriors, and remarkable for its ftrength, and the prodigious thicknefs of its walls, is now an heap of ruins and inhabited only by Birds of prey.

There have been several accounts of this very extraordinary place; the generally received notion, prevalent among all the country people in that neighbor-

D 2

hood,

hood, that it was formerly the habitation of two huge Giants named Tarquin and Tarquinius, however absurd and ridiculous in itself, is as perfectly correspondent with the stile of the place, as the idea of fairies dancing on daisy tops on the verdant plains.

DUGDALE tells us that this Castle was erected in the Reign of Henry the Third ; but there is an ancient manuscript in the Audley family, which proves that its original existence was of much earlier date. It is there said that “ Maud
 “ or Matilda, Wife of William
 “ the Conqueror, gave to John de
 “ Audley, and to his Heirs, the
 “ lands

“ lands about Red Castle in the
 “ county of Salop, for certain ser-
 “ vices done by him to the state.”

Just over the entrance, on the
 side of a decayed piece of wall of
 an astonishing thickness, the fol-
 lowing lines meet your eye :

See this vast antique Pile, how reverend grey
 In hoary age its walls and mould'ring towers !
 With tufted moss and ivy rudely hung,
 From whose high turrets now by years decay'd,
 We trace the dire remains of bloody war.
 These lonesome walks of thick uncouthest shade,
 By length of centuries past, by turns have clos'd
 A race of warriors here entomb'd.

All description must fall infi-
 nitely short of the works of Nature
 and of Antiquity which present
 themselves to view in circling this

hill, which is covered on every side with large trees and thick wood, out of which pieces of broken walls and high turrets rise in different places, and strike the mind with a majestic solemnity, whilst the distant view, wherever it breaks in upon you, is enlivened with every beauty which a fine fruitful country bounded by variety of hills of different shapes and sizes, can afford.

Among the solemn scenes exhibited on the Red Castle Hill, is that dreadful profound abyss, commonly called

THE

THE GIANT'S WELL,

The circular walls of which, above the rock which forms the lower part, are of an immense thickness, and are best seen by looking in at a door on the side ; but whether it ever was a well at all, or whether upon failure of water it was made use of as a tower of defence, is not certain.

By the side of this well or tower a Coffin almost entire was found a few years since, which, on being exposed to the air, mouldered into dust, and discovered several human bones, with the iron beard of an arrow, by means of which it is
sup-

supposed that the person buried there received his mortal wound.

Near this place is an immense cut through the solid rock, at the end of which you are surprized by

A STATELY LION,

Which, being confined within his Den, you may approach with the greatest safety. It is no less true than extraordinary, that tho' these beasts are in general the production of Africa, yet the present one was actually brought forth among the mountains where he now dwells: and tho' his kingly looks strike terror into the beholder, yet he is so tame and docile, that the most

ried
nd. timid may without danger take
him by the tooth, and play with
enfe him as with a Spaniel.

the
d by Having traversed the Red Castle
Hill, you pass by the Lodge to
Weston, a pretty little village, with
a his a very good Inn, and genteely fit-
n the ed up for the reception of com-
true pany who resort thither to see the
thes Park.——There you may refresh
ction yourself after your walk, and ru-
e wa minate on the scenes you have
g th with so much delight been view-
vells ing: And if you choose to rest
strik yourself all night, the next day
he you will have ample time to see
e mo the Roman Camp or Bury Walls,
tim which

which place is not above a mile
distant from the Inn.

O may the HILLS for ever live,
Around this pleasant Shore,
Till Rocks shall crumble into Dust,
And Time shall be no more.

POST

P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE the fore-going Descrip-
tion was written, many very
great improvements have been be-
gun upon, and several more are in-
tended ; particularly an immense
Piece of Water in the form of a
wide navigable River, which is to
be about a Mile and an Half in
length, and near 100 Yards in
breadth, one end of which will
rise itself in a thick wood near
the Lodge, on the road going to
ST Prees and Whitchurch, and the
other end will meet all the grand
scenery between the Grotto Hill
and the Red Castle Hill, in the
middle

middle of that fertile and beautiful Valley which separates those two stupendous Rocks.

Prodigious as this undertaking is, yet as Sir RICHARD HILL keeps a vast number of men constantly employed, (by which means all the industrious poor in the neighbourhood are furnished with bread) there is great reason to hope that in the space of about three years the whole will be completely finished.



F I N I S.

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